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THE PROPHETIC DATES.

By SILAS HENN.

THE prophetic dates are given in Holy Scripture, so that even the greatest scholars, if they are not wise above what is written, will realize some uncertainty in respect to them, at least, in respect to some of them. The fixing of definite time in the past, for the Lord's coming, by so many writers, one writer differing from another, and each set time proving a failure, ought to serve as an admonition against the repetition of this, and prevent any further attempt to fix the time of the consummation of the present age. But it does not. Many are now looking for the kingdom to be set up in 1889; indeed, this is the position taken by some of the leading writers in the World's Crisis. E. C. Bronaugh believes that the forty-five years of waiting (that is, from the tenth day of the seventh month 1844, on which day they believed that Christ would come, but were disappointed) "will expire in 1889, and that our blessed Lord will come then if not before." It is concluded from certain dates by Wm. F. Collier, that the "waiting for the heavenly Bridegroom must end in A.D. 1889." F. W. Clough also gives it as his opinion that the date of 1889 "will witness Jesus Christ and all his redeemed host in full possession and occupancy of this earth."

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We are persuaded that these brethren greatly err—err on various phases of this important subject—through a wrong interpretation of the prophetic dates; and if nothing else will show them their mistake, we believe that the closing days of next year will convince them that they have again committed a serious error. Observe, we offer no opinion as to whether the first stage of the Advent may not take place within that period, but we refer to the Lord's descent to the earth and the beginning of His reign. And all this blundering comes of a strange departure from the literal and plain grammatical meaning of the word where no symbol is used; and of giving an interpretation to symbolical language not warranted by the usage of Scripture. As much, perhaps, has been written, in the form of articles for the Second Advent papers, on the prophetic dates, as would make a number of volumes; yet we are fully persuaded that the interpretation of the dates is utterly wrong, and is a violation of the clear sense of Scripture.

The past failure in reference to dates is the result of a blind adherence to a theory,—a theory which, by this class of writers, never seems to be questioned; and so all the prophetic dates must be made to fit that theory, and symbolical language must be interpreted to fit that theory, and literal language that needs no interpretation must be interpreted, or rather misinterpreted, to suit that theory. We mean the theory that the Papacy is the little horn of Dan. vii., the man of sin of 2 Thess. ii. 3, the Anti-Christ of 1 John ii. 22, the beast of Rev. xiii. 1; xvii. 3; xix. 19; and the great harlot of Rev. xvii.

Now let us look at the dates, and let us look at them apart not only from the theory just alluded to, but from all other theories. Let us ascertain, if possible, their true scriptural sense.

The first we will examine is in Dan. vii. 25. Referring

to the little horn, it is said, "And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High: and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time." How long a period is this? We cannot well over estimate the importance of a correct answer to this question; an incorrect answer involves the whole matter in much confusion. Is there any other passage of Scripture which will help us in the interpretation of this? Yes; there are several. But is there one where the word *times* is used, and where the duration is made clear? There is, and it is in this same book of Daniel, so that we will allow the prophet to give us the sense in which the word is used. It was used in the sentence pronounced on Nebuchadnezzar when the Almighty brought upon him a signal punishment for his taking to himself all the glory of his greatness and of the extent of his dominion. While he was in the very act of praising himself in his royal palace, "There fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from thee. And thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee; until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."—Dan. iv. 31, 32. This sentence was carried out upon the proud king, for in the next verse we are told that "he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." Now some of the ablest Hebrew scholars understand this term to denote years. It could not denote a longer period, for in the 36th verse we are assured that Nebuchadnezzar's understanding returned unto him, and he was again established in his kingdom.

To confirm this statement we quote the following from the "Encyclopædia Britannica," vol. xii. p. 615 (Dublin, 1793) under the heading "Nabuchadnezzar." "He was seized with the disease called by the Greeks *lyconthrophy*, which is a kind of madness that causes persons to run into the fields and streets in the night, and sometimes to suppose themselves to have the heads of oxen, or to be made of glass. At the end of *seven years* his reason returned to him, and he was restored to his throne and glory."

Taking times, then, to denote years, the phrase in Dan. vii. 25, giving us the period of the little horn's persecution of the saints, "a time and times and half a time," will be three years and a half. But to make this fit in with their theory of the Papacy, the Adventists interpret it to denote twelve hundred and sixty years. One writer in the *World's Crisis* says, "The 1260 days, whether given in the 42 Apocalyptic Egyptian months, or by "the time, times, and dividing of time" in Daniel, doubtless span the supremacy of Papacy, apparently from A.D. 554 to 1814, when the edict of universal toleration was issued by the authority of the Alliance." And E. C. Bronaugh, in the same paper, teaches "that the time, times and a half," of Dan. vii. 25, and xii. 7, and of Rev. xii. 14, are shown to be equal to 1260 prophetic days, by verse 6 of the 12th chapter of Revelation; and that a prophetic day is equivalent to a literal year, appears from Numbers xiv. 34 and Ezekiel iv. 6." This conclusion of Mr. Bronaugh's from these passages we will show presently to be erroneous. Now if "a time and times and half a time" denotes twelve hundred and sixty years, then "seven times" would denote twenty-five hundred and twenty years; and another half century or more would yet be required to fulfil the sentence on Nebuchadnezzar. This shows the above interpretation of this phrase to be opposed to Scripture analogy; for we cannot suppose that the word *times* would be used

in the fourth and seventh chapters of the same book in such extremely wide senses without some intimation of such divergence in its use. Besides, with the example of its use in chap. iv., we are compelled by the laws of language and true interpretation not to give it a wider sense in chap. vii.

Let us look at another of the dates, which occurs in Rev. xi. 2, and refers to the same persecution as that in Dan. vii. 25. "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." This date, to support the hypothesis that the Papacy is the little horn, is explained to mean twelve hundred and sixty years, all the days of the months being converted into as many years. But it is an outrage on all true exegesis. We take forty-two months to mean forty-two months; there is no proof that a month here means anything else than a month. And the phrase, understood in its plain sense, understood to mean three years and a half, accords exactly with Daniel's "time and times and half a time."

The next date we notice is in ver. 3, of the same chapter, and also refers to the same period. "And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Here we have harmony again. These twelve hundred and sixty days are parallel to the forty-two months. But these days, to serve the end already referred to, are converted into years. This is done not only without any authority from the context, but in direct opposition to it. Then the admission of one error often involves the receiving of another. It is so here. These twelve hundred and sixty days are asserted to be twelve hundred and sixty years. But during these twelve hundred and sixty days the Lord's two witnesses prophesy; and when their testimony is finished, they are overcome and killed, "and their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city;" but after three

days and a half they are raised from the dead. Now as it would be supremely ridiculous to say that these two men prophesy twelve hundred and sixty years, they have, to be consistent with their theory, to deny that they are men; and hence some explain the two witnesses to be the Old and New Testaments, and others explain them to denote churches; but this explanation clashes with the statement that the witnesses are killed and that their carcasses lie in the street, and that after the three days and a half the breath of life from God enters into them, and they stand upon their feet; so an allegorical meaning has to be sought for this also.

But we will now examine the passages which are thought to teach that prophetic days should be counted for years, or to establish what is usually understood by the year-day theory. Now while we object to this theory, believing that the general sense of Scripture is against such an application of the prophetic dates, we would, nevertheless apply this rule where God applies it. But we object strongly to the application of it in cases where there is nothing in the passage or the context to require it. Where the rule should be applied, evidence of its required application is plainly furnished, as in the passages referred to. Numb. xiv. 34: "After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation." The children of Israel cherished unbelief and murmured against God for forty days, and God punished them for their unbelief by causing them to wander in the wilderness forty years. But those days were not years. The forty days were *forty days*, neither fewer nor more. The forty days spent by the spies in searching the land were not symbolical days, were not prophetic periods, and no divine warrant is furnished by this case to interpret a day to mean a year

in other cases. Commenting on this passage, James Kelly says, "The only words that can be denominated *prophetic*, are these,—“Your children shall wander in the wilderness *forty years* ;” (ver. 33) and we know Israel did wander in the wilderness for that exact period. The appointment, indeed, of such a period for their probation, had a designed proportion to the number of the days in which the spies, with perverse minds, had been occupied in searching the land. But the forty days mean forty days as truly as the forty years mean forty years. If it were said, ‘your children shall wander in the wilderness forty days,’—the *event* being that they wandered forty years—then, the year-day theory would have a precedent. But there is no such statement; the simple record being, that God adjusted the punishment of Israel so as to give to it a retributive aspect—forty years experience of the wilderness, for forty days harbouring of unbelief.” Ezek. iv. 5, 6: “Moreover lie thou upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have appointed the years of their iniquity to be unto thee a number of days, even three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And again, when thou hast accomplished these, thou shalt lie on thy right side, and shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah: forty days, each day for a year, have I appointed it unto thee.” These days were simply types of the number of years during which the judgments of God should come upon the children of Israel and the children of Judah for their sin. Here everything is plain. A certain case is given, a certain rule is applied to it, and the Lord God Himself gives instruction for the application of that rule. But what right have we to apply that rule where He does not?

It is at our peril to make an application of such a rule to prophetic time without His authority. It is doing this that has brought such confusion and contradiction into the interpretation of the prophetic periods.

It is a strong argument—indeed, we think an unanswerable argument—against interpreting these phrases on the year-day system, that they are all just the half of seven, the number which in Scripture is a perfect number, and is so often used. While there may be a few instances in which the word is used for an indefinite number, the word is used generally in its well-known signification. Besides other instances in the Bible, we have in this last book the seven Spirits, the seven churches, the seven stars, the seven golden candlesticks, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven plagues. Now, it is very significant that the dates in question are just the half of this number seven. The “forty and two months,” or three years and a half; the “thousand two hundred and three-score days,” or three years and a half. Now, if we take the seven churches to mean seven churches, and the seven candlesticks to mean seven candlesticks, why should not we take the forty and two months to mean forty and two months, or the half of seven years; and the twelve hundred and sixty days to mean twelve hundred and sixty days, or the half of seven years?

Again, it is necessary to give very special attention to the several dates in Dan. ix. 24—27, or to the seventy weeks, because the right understanding of these will lead to the right understanding of other dates. Wrong in the interpretation of these—especially of the last week—and we are wrong in the interpretation of almost all prophecy. The greatest care, then, is necessary to understand this aright. It will assist our thoughts to give here the entire passage. Daniel had been in solemn and earnest prayer before the Lord his God, confessing both his own sin and

the sin of his people Israel; and while thus engaged, Gabriel came near unto him, and told him that he had come forth to make him skilful of understanding. He was, therefore, to consider the matter, and understand the vision. "Seventy weeks," said Gabriel, "are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks: and threescore and two weeks, it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and his end shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolator." In these passages we find things, comparing the events predicted, so far as they have been fulfilled, with the facts of history, which absolutely forbid us to understand a week to mean, as it does with us, seven days. "The correct translation of the original Hebrew here," as one scholar observes, "is *seventy-sevens*." This is confirmed by others. W. Ker says, "The word rendered week in our version simply means a *period of seven*, but does not specify of what. It might be of hours, or days, or months, or centuries. The Hebrew

word signifying simply a period of seven, we are left in doubt of what it consists, which can only be ascertained, either by the context, or by the fulfilment of the prediction. Now we know with certainty from the accomplishment of a portion of this prophecy, viz., that up to the cutting off of the Messiah, that the periods are to be understood *as of years*."

But have we any precedent in the Old Testament by which we may also know what the word here signifies, or the sense in which it has been used? We have. In Lev. xxv. 8, we read, "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and there shall be unto thee the days of seven sabbaths of years, even forty and nine years." This numeral was familiar with the Hebrews. And some things in the prophecy which have passed into history, verify the correctness of understanding a week to signify, not seven days, as with us, but seven years.

These seventy weeks specially concerned the Israelites, and Jehovah's dealings with them during these periods are designed to accomplish the important results set forth in the words of the angel.

It will be seen that the seventy weeks are broken up into three divisions: seven weeks (49 years); sixty-two weeks (434 years); and one week (7 years). This would not be done without a cause. Infinite wisdom would be concerned in this order. Some important events would transpire in each of these several periods which would in a sense separate them from each other, and make each period a distinct period.

The seventy weeks commenced when the command was given to restore the city, which was "in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the King," 454 years B.C., though some eminent scholars give it as 445 B.C. During the first seven weeks, or forty-nine years, Jerusalem was to be

rebuilt. Then after these seven weeks, and after the threescore and two weeks more,—sixty-nine weeks, that is, four hundred and eighty three years—prophetic years, each containing three hundred and sixty days—was Messiah the Prince to be cut off. The sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty three years ended when Christ entered Jerusalem “riding upon an ass,” and when the multitude cried, saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” four days prior to His crucifixion. And at this event, the one week, or seven years here named, are separated from the sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. The nation was cast off for their unbelief and their rejection of Christ; the kingdom was taken from them, or the setting up of the kingdom was put off, and their history, as the Lord’s people, broke off here, to be resumed at the commencement of the one week, or seven years. The prince, the desolator that shall come, shall make a covenant with the Jews for seven years, and in the midst of the seven years he will violate the covenant. That has not yet been done, and therefore, this last week of the seventy has not yet commenced. Dr. A. J. Gordon says the seventy weeks of Daniel have “by unanimous consent been fulfilled.” As a matter of fact, this is simply a falsehood. Many consent to this view, it is true, but many oppose it. There are probably thousands of prophetic students who do not believe that the seventieth of the seventy weeks is yet begun.

The thought just now introduced is a very important point in the discussion of this subject, a pivotal point on which hangs much of the controversy between the historic school and the futurists, and we must dwell upon it a little. We believe that during all these long ages since the cutting off of the Messiah by the Jewish nation, there has been a suspension of their history; and that as the whole of the seventy weeks specially concerns them as a

people, the seventieth week does not begin till they are gathered again in their own land in sufficient numbers to enter into this covenant with the prince that shall come. This will take place near the close of the times of the Gentiles. A great deal of misunderstanding and contradiction and disappointment has arisen by teaching that the events of the seventieth week were fulfilled in the first century. Some have taught that the seventy weeks were completed at the crucifixion of Christ; others have taught that they were completed at the destruction of Jerusalem. Walter Cook, in a small work he has lately published, says, "Seventy weeks were appointed from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem to the death of the Anointed One, or the Christ." J. C. Smith, in the *World's Crisis*, teaches that the seventy weeks "expired by the overthrow of Jerusalem and the Jews by Titus during the one week or seven years' war, which was the last week of the seventy." The former of these two writers plainly contradicts Gabriel, and the latter contradicts the facts of history. But Dr. Litch denies that the one week of verse 27, constitutes any part of the seventy. He says that "the 69 weeks were fulfilled in A.D. 26, when Christ was baptised and anointed with the Holy Spirit." He says that "He was crucified in A.D. 33, seven years after His anointing, and the seventy weeks were completed." But this is not only contrary to the most approved chronology, but it is contrary to verses 25, 26, which teach that the Anointed One was to be cut off after the sixty-nine weeks. There is nothing in the Word to show that the one week of verse 27 does not belong to the seventy, as Dr. Litch tries to prove, but that it is a week by itself independent of the seventy. It belongs properly to the seventy, as is clear by the words of Gabriel, but its fulfilment awaits the closing up of the gap in Jewish history. Until many of

the Jews are gathered and an alliance is formed between them and the prince that shall come, it is kept in abeyance.

During this long period of Jewish scattering, and while they are no longer reckoned as a nation, it is clear that the last of Daniel's seventy weeks, or the closing seven years, are not reckoned. These *Hebdomads* concern the Jews. Nationally the Jews have long ceased to exist, and hence this last of the seventy weeks is suspended while, as a nation, they are dead; but as soon as their nationality again commences, this last *Hebdomad* begins to count. Some writers, as we have seen, insist that the seventieth week succeeded the sixty-ninth without any break. This, we admit, would have been the natural order; but the evidence against it is too strong to admit that this was the fact. And the circumstance that this one week is cut off from all the rest,—so far as its fulfilment is concerned, though belonging to them,—and is counted by itself, and certain events are put into it separate and distinct from all the events of the preceding weeks, is very significant. It is certain the Anointed one was not cut off till after the seven weeks, and the sixty-two weeks; but history affords no evidence that the things predicted to take place in the seventieth week, or the last seven years, did really take place in the seven years immediately following the death of Christ, or the cutting off of the Anointed. It was predicted that “the prince that shall come” “shall make a firm covenant with many for one week,” and that in the midst of the week—the middle of the seven years—he shall violate it—“shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease;” but nothing like this was known to transpire in the seven years immediately following the crucifixion of Christ. No Jewish historian knows of any covenant that was made with the Jewish people when the Messiah was cut off, and that was broken at the expiration of three years and a half. And the New Testament contains evi-

dence that the sacrifice and the oblation did not cease in that time; that the worship of the temple continued for many years. Indeed, there is no evidence to show that the service of the temple was given up till the destruction of Jerusalem. To be true to chronology—the best and most approved chronology—and the seventieth week cannot be made to suit the time of the cutting off of the Messiah, or the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

On this subject Geo. N. H. Peters has some excellent remarks. “It has been well observed,” he says, “by various writers that if the seventy weeks are *to end* with the death of Christ and the incoming destruction of Jerusalem, it is simply *impossible*—with all ingenuity expended in this direction by eminent men—to make out *an accurate* fulfilment of prophecy from the dates given, for the time usually adduced being either too long to fit with the crucifixion of Christ, or too short to extend to the destruction of Jerusalem. That, and that alone, which seems to meet the difficulty, is to allow, that the Spirit when he comes to a certain period, introducing the Roman power, separates a portion of those seventy weeks from the rest, because of the rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation and the domination of the Gentile power.” Further, he says, “So far as the sixty-nine weeks are concerned, there is no difficulty, for there is, as numerous writers (Tregelles, Brookes, &c.,) have shown, *a strictly chronological fulfilment* down to Christ’s death. The trouble is what to do with the last week which is in *excess* to that death and too *brief* to extend to the destruction of Jerusalem. It is *at the end of this last week* that the transgression is to be restrained. The only explanation is, that, as the prophecy itself intimates, this one week is *detached, separated from the rest*, and held in abeyance—owing to the rejection of the nation and pre-eminence of Gentile

times—until this nation is again recognised in its national capacity.”

It was the view held by Hippolytus “that the last week denotes the future period of the Anti-christ at the end of the dispensation.” Apollinaris, Kliefoth, Keil, and other able critics regard the seventieth week as cut off from the rest, as being still future, and as being the week in which the Anti-christ shall play his part. Just as the term, the day of the Lord, or the judgment, includes one thousand years, so the term, “the time of the end,” or, “the end of the days,” may include the seventieth week, or seven years.

Speaking of the *time of the end*, of which the book of Daniel specially treats, Dr. Nathaniel West says, It is “the last world-week, *i.e.*, the 70th of the 70 weeks of Daniel, the whole period between the First and Second Advents being a parenthesis between the 69th and 70th of these prophetic weeks. In this last week Israel’s history is resumed for the final tribulation and glory. The Jew is the key to the Apocalypse. The first three and one half years of this world-week are occupied with the rise of Anti-christ; the second three and one half with the fall of Anti-christ.”

Again; but there are several other prophetic periods in Daniel which we must notice, though briefly, and we will notice them together as they are connected one with another. Dan. viii. 9—14: “And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the glorious land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them. Yea, it magnified itself, even to the prince of the host; and it took away from him the continual burnt offering, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And the host was given

over to it together with the continual burnt offering through transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground, and it did its pleasure and prospered. Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said unto that certain one which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, and the transgression that maketh desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Chap. xii. 11, 12: "And from the time that the continual burnt offering shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." We shall not here enter into any discussion concerning the little horn mentioned in the first of these passages, as our concern now is with the dates. We have shown, we think conclusively, in another essay, that the little horn is the yet future Anti-christ, and that his doings extend through a considerable part of these periods. Now these several different numbers of days are, by the Adventists, converted into years. The special contributors to the Advent papers, when they discuss these days, say that years are meant. Wm. Hobbs says, speaking of the twenty-three hundred days, "We may know these days symbolize years as the measure of the supremacy of Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome." Wm. F. Collier teaches that these days are years, and that they began some time during the Persian monarchy, and ended in 1814. Others also date their beginning hundreds of years before the time of Christ. Now we leave any one of common sense and honesty to judge whether there is not evidence on the part of these writers of a greater desire to stand by a system to which they have committed

themselves, than to stand by the word of God. It seems to us almost impossible to frame a theory more opposite to the plain teaching of Scripture. Making these days to symbolize years, they have to date back their beginning about 486 years before Christ. Those who make them end with the thirteen hundred and thirty-five years, and believe that ending will be in 1889, have to put back their commencement about 411 years before Christ. And Wm. Sheldon, who thinks they will end about 1896 has to put back their beginning a little more than 400 years before Christ. Now what are we taught by the word of God on this point? What saith the angel who was commissioned by the Almighty to communicate this matter to the prophet? We have already quoted to verse 14 of chapter viii., where mention is made of the twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings. We will now give the verses that follow:—"And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I was affrighted, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man; for the vision belongeth to the time of the end. Now as he was speaking with me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the latter time of the indignation: for it belongeth to the appointed time of the end." Verses 15—19. Now if this vision of things, covering twenty-three hundred days, *belongeth to the time of the end*, it cannot belong to the time of the beginning, or the time near the beginning, as it would do, in part, if these days symbolize years, for they would take us back near to the time when Daniel

lived, and had the vision. Then Gabriel, it will be seen, repeats this statement concerning the time of the end, with the previous declaration, "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the *latter time of the indignation*." But if the vision concerns the *latter* time of the indignation, it cannot concern the former time of it, as it certainly would do, in part, if these days were meant for years, and carried back the vision to almost 500 years before the time of our Lord. Blame us not then for speaking strongly when we charge this class of writers, which are numerous, with going directly contrary to the plain grammatical meaning of the word. We will abide by Gabriel, the inspired messenger of Jehovah. He says "the vision belongeth to the time of the end." So will we understand it. Then the things seen in this vision belong to the future. We may now be very near the time of the end, but we are not yet in it. Then the twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings will be twenty-three hundred days. And on the same principle we must understand the other two dates in the 12th chapter. The twelve hundred and ninety days, and the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days are literal days, not years; for these also belong to the *time of the end*, this phrase being also given in this chapter, as if to save us, if possible, from mistake.

We will now offer a few remarks which may throw some light on these prophetic dates. The sacrifice and the oblation will be made to cease in the middle of the seventieth week, or the covenant seven years, as we learn from Dan. ix. 27. This agrees with the time and times and half a time of Dan. vii. 25, and with the forty and two months, and twelve hundred and sixty days, of Rev. xiii. 5; xi. 2, 3. To these are added thirty days (Dan. xii. 11), making twelve hundred and ninety days; the thirty days being added to the seven years before the sanctuary is cleansed, or during which,—whether the

whole or a part is not certain,—the sanctuary is cleansed.

In the twenty-three hundred days three things are mentioned as covering the entire period; the daily sacrifice, or continual burnt offering, the transgression that maketh desolate, and the cleansing of the sanctuary. The cleansing of the temple is at the end. We know not how many days will be occupied in this work. Some, indeed, think the whole thirty. But it is important to remember that the first two things named do not exist at the same time. The transgression that maketh desolate does not exist till the daily sacrifice ceases to exist. The three things cover the twenty-three hundred days, but follow each other in the order named.

If the twelve hundred and ninety days end the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, and the purification of the sanctuary, then the twenty-three hundred days, ending at the same time, must begin farther back, that is, in the first half of the seven years. They must go back ten hundred and ten days into the first three and a half years. In other words, the twenty-three hundred days must commence two hundred and fifty days after the beginning of the seven years. The covenant will be made at the beginning of the seven years, but two hundred and fifty days will probably elapse before the sacrifice and the oblation are again observed; and they will continue to be observed ten hundred and ten days before the prince shall violate his covenant and cause them to cease. The cleansing of the sanctuary, therefore, will be thirty days after the seven years, or at the end of the twelve hundred and ninety days, which date from the middle of the seven years; or at the end of the twenty-three hundred days, which will commence when a little more than eight months of the first half of the seven years have passed away.

As there are three hundred and sixty-five days in the

ordinary year, which, if reckoned here, would make the seven years reach to twenty-five hundred and fifty-five days, making thirty-five days in the seven years over the seven prophetic years, which contain twenty-five hundred and twenty days, some have added thirty of these days to the latter half of the seven years, making the latter half twelve hundred and ninety. But we object to this as it is an unnatural division, leaving five days to be added to the first half of the seven years, making the first half twelve hundred and sixty-five days. We prefer to reckon three hundred and sixty days to each year,—the number of days in the prophetic year,—making the first half of the seven years twelve hundred and sixty days, and the latter half also twelve hundred and sixty days, with thirty days added, lengthening out the latter half to twelve hundred and ninety days, ere the abomination that maketh desolate shall be fully removed and the work of cleansing the sanctuary completed.

But we must add a few words on the last date, (Dan. xii. 12) thirteen hundred and thirty-five days. These additional forty-five days to the twelve hundred and ninety, come between the ending of the abomination and the cleansing of the temple, and the standing up of Daniel in his lot in the resurrection. These forty-five days especially, and to some extent, the previous thirty days which are added to the twelve hundred and sixty, will be days of terrible judgments on the prince, the Anti-christ, and on those who are in alliance with him, prior to the setting up of the kingdom.

Let the above arguments be seriously and prayerfully pondered, for we believe they are based on Holy Scripture and on undeniable facts. As the right understanding of these prophetic dates affects the understanding of other things in relation to the second Advent, the importance of an impartial examination of them will be easily seen.

DEFINITE TIME-SETTING.

BY SILAS HENN.

It should never be concluded that because we faithfully point out and refute the errors of an author, therefore, we do not esteem and love him. If we really love him, we should the more faithfully endeavour to show him wherein he errs, and lead him to embrace the truth. We should watch against any tendency to a spirit of unkindness, and pray to be saved from bigotry; and though some may hold views which we are compelled to regard as unsound, we should not on this ground regard them as lacking in piety. Even in those who oppose our views, and seem to be bitter against us for advocating them, there may be more good than we imagine. Let us guard against the exaltation of self, and remember our own weakness and liability to err, and cherish a meek and lowly spirit, and we shall be kept from bigotry, and from denouncing and condemning all who differ from us.

It is well known that the Advent movement in America, under the leadership of William Miller, created great sensation on account of his misunderstanding the prophetic dates, and fixing upon a definite time for the Lord to come, which time, when it came, proved the incorrectness of his calculations, and the folly of definite time-setting.

For a while he preached that the Lord would come in 1843, and then ultimately fixed on the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844, as the date of that event. He had quite a number of followers whom he won over to embrace this view; and when the day arrived, they looked for the appearing of Jesus. Many left their homes, never to go back, as they believed, to be present together in their last evening meetings, and to be caught up together to meet the Lord. But the next day covered them with shame and disappointment, for they failed to realize their expectations, and found they had committed a great blunder. Thus they laid themselves open to censure and reproach, and cast a stumbling-block in the way of multitudes. The precious and yet solemn truth that Jesus *will* come again; is none the less true because some have been so unwise as to set a time for His coming.

But while this foolish and unhappy time-setting and conspicuous failure, caused some to renounce the truth, with which they had associated so much error, and otherwise did much harm in preventing others from giving heed to prophecy, many still held fast to the Scriptural teaching that Christ *will* come again, but saw their mistake in having fixed upon a definite day for the event. A while after this, still perplexed and anxious for further light, but too hasty in settling upon something which should extenuate their blunder, their "eyes caught," as one, who joined the movement in 1841, says, "the life-saving text to Adventism. It was found in the parable of the ten virgins—"While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." This broke in upon us like the pillar of fire by night; and for the first time we learned we were in the tarrying time of Habakkuk's vision and John's bitterness after eating the little book." Now this finding, in our judgment, is only imaginary, as was their finding of definite time. The wresting of certain phrases from

Scripture, in order to meet a given case, or bridge over some difficulty, without regard to the analogy of Scripture, were sure to lead to other great errors. Let us see now whether this is not so.

It is concluded as Christ did not come in 1844, that this is the tarrying time of the Bridegroom, and that it has already continued about forty-four years. Now, let it be specially observed that the tarrying time of the Bridegroom, is the slumbering time of the ten virgins,—of the wise as well as of the foolish. This is too plain to be denied. “*While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*” The Adventists claim this as applicable to their position, and seek strength and hope and comfort from it. But thus applied, it is a great mistake, as any student of Scripture and Advent history may see. The period between the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844, and the present, is not the tarrying time, properly so called, of the heavenly Bridegroom, which is proved by the two following reasons:—1. Of all the periods of time since the first two or three centuries, there has never been a period so remarkable for the wakeful, watchful attitude of so large a number of Christians, in reference to the Lord's second coming, as these last forty-four years have been. In no other similar period have there ever been so many books, and pamphlets, and periodicals, and weekly papers published on this subject. In no other similar period have there ever been so many sermons preached and so many lectures delivered on this subject. In no other similar period have there ever been so many hymns composed and published and sung on the Lord's second Advent. In no other period of the same duration have there ever been so many and such large and important prophetic conferences. In no other period of the same length have there ever been, either in England or in America, or in any other part of the world, so many thou-

sands of believers in the Lord's soon coming. These last forty-four years have been the most remarkable in all the last fifteen hundred years for talking, and praying, and singing, and preaching, and lecturing, and publishing on the second appearing of Jesus Christ. By many hundreds of ministers—though they ought to be counted even by tens of thousands—the subject is being constantly pushed to the front, and the Church and the world are being warned as never before since the times of the primitive Christians. If at any period since their days a great multitude of believers have been awake on the glorious theme of the Lord's coming, it is the period embraced in the forty-four years since W. Miller and his followers expected to see the Lord. This cannot be denied. The numerous Second Advent ministers, and missionaries, and publications in America, and the numerous believers and heralds of the doctrine in the pulpit and through the press in this country, are all evidence of this. Then, on the supposition that the Church are the virgins, how, we ask, can these last forty-four years be the tarrying time of the Bridegroom, seeing that the tarrying time of the Bridegroom is also the time of the slumbering of the virgins? These last forty-four years have been the time, *not* of slumbering and sleeping, but of *waking* up.

2. The tarrying time of the bridegroom in the parable is between the marriage at the home of the father of the bride and the marriage feast at the home of the bridegroom. The ancient customs that attended marriages in the east are well known by men of learning. Several days passed between the marriage and the marriage feast referred to in the 10th verse of the chapter containing the parable (Matt. xxv.) The bridegroom and the bride after their union, were on their way to their future home when they were met by the virgins. The virgins were expecting to be present at the feast at the bridegroom's

home after the marriage. The time between the marriage and this feast, specially the latter part of the time when the bridegroom was expected, was the tarrying time in the parable. Now, we have no right to force the parable, or any part of it, to make it suit a theory; and the only time in the event of the great Bridegroom's coming that corresponds with this time in the parable, is the time between the marriage of Christ and His Church, His elect Bride, and His coming with His Bride to mount Zion. Hence when the presence of the Bridegroom in the parable is announced, in the 6th verse, the reading in some of the ancient versions is, "*the Bridegroom and the Bride.*" After the Church is caught up in the clouds, the marriage of the Lamb and His wife is celebrated in heaven, and there is a marriage supper. (Rev. xix.) And when the heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride come to the earth, and march in triumph to Palestine, there will also be a feast, called the marriage feast, which may take place in "the mountain of the Lord's house," which "shall be established at the head of the mountains;" and when the appearance of the Bridegroom is announced, friends, chiefly of the Jewish nation then assembled in the Holy Land, will go to meet Him expecting to be present at the feast, some of whom will not be admitted because of a lack of full preparation. But, however near the day and the hour may be when the Church—those who sleep in Jesus and those who remain, who are yet alive—shall be caught up, that event has not yet taken place; and therefore, the tarrying time—the time between the marriage of the Bridegroom and His coming to the earth—has not yet begun. We are aware that as the end is approaching, and Christ still remains at the right hand of the Father, it may be said that the Lord delayeth His coming; but this is not the tarrying represented by the parable. The time is not the same. The circumstances are not the

same. When the dead in Christ are raised, and living believers are translated, and all are caught up together; then, when those left on the earth calculate, from their study of the prophetic Word, that the time is near for the Lord's coming to Mount Zion with myriads of His holy ones, it will be the tarrying time. And this is the only time that is analogous to the tarrying time in the parable. All this, to us, seems so plain that we are surprised that so many brethren fail to see it. But there is one thing which, to our mind, is much more surprising than simple failure to see this; it is a thing which gives us pain, because it has the appearance of a disregard for the truth. The misunderstanding of this parable arises, in part, as we have shown in another essay, from the inaccuracy of the reading of the Authorized Version. Yet although the inaccuracy has been long pointed out by Greek scholars and critical writers, and although in the Revised Version it is corrected, and the Revised Version has been in circulation about seven years, Second Advent writers to this day continue to quote the false reading. This certainly has the appearance of holding on to a theory, by any means, to which they have once committed themselves. Truth should be more precious to us than any system; it should be prized as the most valuable jewel; any favourite notion, whether old or new, should be made to give way to truth.

Further, it is said that the Adventists, after their failure in time-setting, learned that they were in the tarrying time of Habakkuk's vision. But this vision, (Chap. ii. 2, 3) as any one may see who will examine, refers to the Anti-christ, or the beast, and the confederation of wickedness that shall exist just before the open manifestation of Christ, or the coming of the Holy One in judgment, which will not take place till after the first resurrection. Hence in the 4th verse, it is said, "His soul

is puffed up, it is not upright in him." And in the 5th verse, it is said that he "enlargeth his desire as hell, (or, Sheol), and he is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all peoples." The entire context shows that the reference is to a proud, haughty, self-deified man, who will raise himself to great power,—to be the head of the nations, and obtain evil gain by violence. And the third chapter shows that this is the day of trouble, when the Holy One will "march through the land in indignation" upon His "chariots of salvation," and "thresh the nations in anger." But so many other Scriptures show that when the Lord thus comes as a mighty Conqueror, He is accompanied with myriads of His saints, who also will "execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the peoples," that we are compelled to locate this after the resurrection of the dead in Christ; for until the saints are resurrected they cannot, as co-rulers with Him, be associated with Him in this judgment period. Hence instead of placing "the tarrying time of Habakkuk's vision," between the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844 and the present day, we must place it between the saints' resurrection and marriage with the Lamb, and the Lord's coming with them in judgment for the salvation of Israel, who will then be under the power of the haughty and blasphemous oppressor. For it should not be forgotten that Habakkuk,—as, indeed, was the case with all the prophets who foretold future events,—in describing the time of trouble, would be transported in spirit, if we may so speak, to the very scene. When the revelation was made to him, the scene would be spread out before him, and he spoke as if he was in the midst of the very events which he was predicting; he was afraid, and trembled, and desired mercy and deliverance for the oppressed people. He believed deliverance would come. Though the vision

tarry, it hasteth toward the end. Those who see that day, who see the terrible doings of the haughty man, and wait and pray for deliverance, will be in Habakkuk's tarrying time. If our apprehension of this matter is correct, we have not yet reached that time.

But further, it is said that the Adventists are also in the tarrying time of "John's bitterness after eating the little book." Strange! How, we ask, can a man who has been studying prophecy forty-seven years, make such a statement? And how could the statement find its way into print in an Advent paper, under the eye of a learned editor? The time here referred to in Rev. x. 9, is "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound," and when, at the sound of the trumpet, the mystery of God is finished. By the *days* must be understood the period in which this vision will be fulfilled. Hence the wisdom of the expression, "when he is *about* to sound." For *at* the sounding of the trumpet, as we see from chap. xi. 15, the Christ sets up His kingdom. The finishing of the mystery of God, then, must take in the descent of the Christ in judgment, when the Anti-christ and the kingdoms allied with him are punished; when there is no more delay in the redemption of Israel, and when the cry of the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, is answered. This we need not say points to a time yet future. The little book which John was commanded to eat up doubtless symbolizes the things which shall shortly come to pass, which were included in the mystery of God, and which were set forth in the predictions previously and afterward given. When it was in his mouth it was sweet as honey; the first thoughts he had of its contents were pleasant. But when he had eaten up the little book, his belly was made bitter; that is, when he had thoroughly pondered and digested its contents, when he had seriously thought of the falling away, of the

decay of religion, of the rise of the Anti-christ, the beast, the great enemy of God and His Christ, and of the terrible persecutions of the last days, he was sore distressed, sad, pained in his mind. And he was required to "prophesy again over (or, concerning) many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

But what is meant by John's tarrying time of bitterness? This is a mixing up of two thoughts, or two things, one taken from his Gospel, and the other from the Apocalypse, by which serious error is produced. In John xxi. 20—24, it is said, "Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee? Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Peter was inquisitive; he had just had an intimation of the kind of death he should die, and he seems desirous to know what kind of death John would die. John too might like to know, yet not be forward enough to ask. Christ's answer, therefore, must be regarded as a rebuke. The whole drift of the conversation seems to require us to understand Him as saying, as Trench thinks, "Even should I will that he remain upon earth till my last coming—what would that be to thee?" Barnes, unhesitatingly gives the same sense, "If I will that he should not *die at all*, it is nothing to thee." Jesus did not mean that he should actually tarry, live on, abide in the flesh, till His second appearing. Hence the saying that was raised by the brethren, that John should not die, is strongly and emphatically negatived by the Record, "Jesus said *not*

unto him, that he should not die." Jesus did *not* tell him that he should tarry till the second coming. Scholars agree that the original word here translated, to *tarry*, signifies "to remain in this life;" and is the same that in chap. xii. 34, is translated, *abideth*, in the phrase, "the Christ abideth for ever." But John has not tarried, has not abided here. This saying of Christ's was hypothetical, and was intended as a reproof for Peter's forwardness. John, though he outlived the rest of the apostles, and did not suffer a violent death as did Peter and others, passed away at Ephesus. He died, he was not permitted to tarry till the second coming. History clearly shows not only that his decease, but also his interment took place at that great commercial city. As, therefore, to *tarry*, means to abide, to live, and John has been dead and buried nearly eighteen centuries, how can the Adventists of the past forty-four years be in the tarrying time of John's bitterness? The things which John was commanded to prophesy, which should take place under the seventh trumpet, and which were contained in the little book, are still in the future. We are not yet in that time. And the time he experienced the bitterness was when the command to prophesy was given, and the things to be foretold were understood, contemplated, or digested; and that is in the long gone by past. The passage in the Gospel and that in the Apocalypse have no connection; they are in no way related to each other; yet they are mixed up in the paper referred to. In the Apocalypse there is not a word about John tarrying in the bitterness. There is no evidence that he remained in it long. It might have continued no longer than the time of his prophesying; but even if it continued during the remainder of his life, he having now been dead nearly eighteen hundred years, his tarrying time of bitterness is not in any sense the tarrying time of the Adventists; and then the

things which John was required to foretell, and the contemplation of which gave him distress and pain, are yet in the time to come; for they are to take place in the days when the seventh trumpet is about to sound; and when it does sound, the mystery of God will be finished.

The misapplication of Scripture even by persons of undoubted piety, is very pitiable. Without any reference to the people of whom certain things were spoken, or to the context, they will sever a clause from one passage, and a few words from another, and appropriate them to themselves. Such a course evinces disregard to the mind of the Holy Spirit in the Word, and a greater love for a favourite theory than for the truth.

The proverb says, "A head-long man is not a man with a long head." Many things are done without proper forethought which afterwards cause deep regret; had previous thought, with much prayer for divine guidance, been bestowed upon them, they would not have been done at all; and some things which are proper to be done, are hastily done, and therefore, not well done. The long-headed man will take time to pause and think and examine before he does a thing, and when he makes up his mind to do it, he does it thoroughly, and his work will stand and bear looking at; whereas the headlong man, acting hurriedly, often does wrong things, and sometimes even does right things in a wrong way. Have not many things been done in reference to time-setting which would never have been done had the doers of them been longheaded, very cautious, and slow to make haste in a matter involving so much uncertainty?

In closing this subject, we give it as our solemn judgment that those who set a definite time for the Lord's appearing, do so in direct violation of the Word, which declares that we know not the day nor the hour when the Lord will come. And they put themselves in a posture of

daily disobedience to God, for if, say a year beforehand, they set a given day for the coming of the Lord, they cannot obey the requirement of daily watchfulness all through that year until the day they have persuaded themselves the event will take place. The attitude required of Christians is one of constant watchfulness, constant readiness, constant looking, constant waiting; but those who get carried away and deceived with dates and time-setting, and believe the Saviour will come at a definite time in the future, which they imagine they have made out from the chronology of the Bible, cannot possibly fulfil this requirement. They frustrate the design of the Holy Spirit in keeping the time hidden from our knowledge. If we believe it to be near, and may occur at any time, such belief gives meaning and force to the command to watch and wait and be always ready.

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